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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to provide an after-school activity program to middle school students not engaged in interscholastic sports. Utilizing community volunteers, an enrichment-prevention program that featured 19 different activities in 2 class sessions per week over a 10-week period was developed and implemented. Activities included computers, investing, embroidery, study skills, science projects, Spanish, fashion, drama, aerobics, old-fashioned board games, chorus, jewelry making, quilting, dance, military history, and journalism. The activities utilized volunteer teachers, parents, high school students, and community members to provide instruction and support. Analysis of volunteer, student, and parent surveys indicated strong support for the activities and the continued existence of the program. (Six appendices include lists of possible activity offerings, a sample volunteer information form and survey, activity descriptions, and student and parent surveys. Contains 27 references.) (MDM)

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A COMMUNITY-BASED VOLUNTEER AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITY PROGRAM CREATED FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

by

Thomas C. Greaser Jr.

Cluster 53

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A Practicum II Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

1995

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier:

Barbara Ripa

Barbara Ripa

Principal of Middle School

Title

Ellington, CT

Address

May 19, 1995

Date

This practicum report was submitted by Thomas C. Greaser Jr. under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

17 June 1995

Date of Final Approval of Report

Roberta Wong Bouverat

Roberta Wong Bouverat, Ph. D., Advisor

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ABSTRACT

A Community-Based Volunteer After-School Activity Program Created for Middle School Students. Greaser Jr., Thomas C., 1995: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Community Service/ /Volunteers/After School/Elementary/Middle/Junior High/Senior High School/ /Activity Program/Human Resources/Adolescents/ Business/Community Members/Cross-Age Tutoring/Mentoring/Budget.

This practicum was designed to provide an after-school activity program on site that utilized community volunteers for students not involved in interscholastic sports. Volunteers included businesses, high school students, parents, teachers, and senior citizens. The idea developed from three themes in the literature (a) the concept of community, (b) unsupervised children after school, and (c) before and/or after school programs for children.

A pilot after-school activity enrichment/prevention program was developed that featured 19 different activities in 2 class sessions from 2:30 - 5:30 p.m. for two 5 week sessions. Material developed included cover letters, volunteer sign-up forms, volunteer instruction letter, thank-you letter, volunteer, student, and parent surveys, and student sign-up forms with activity descriptions. Connections were established in the community by meeting with and/or calling the parent organization, high school administration, the boards of education, selectmen, and finance, the business alliance, and child advocates in key power or influential positions in town.

Analysis of the data revealed there was much support and help from businesses, the human service and recreation department, high school students, and boards of finance and selectman. Use of political system analysis was critical to bring divergent boards in town to focus on the need and vision of the activity program.. Survey results indicated the strong need for continuation and expansion of the program.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The community is predominately a white middle class town that is in proximity to a small metropolitan area. The town is in a suburban area that is gradually being developed as a bedroom community. Once a dairy farm region, today the farms are slowly being sold off for housing developments. The serene look of the open pastures and farmland is disappearing steadily, giving way to more traffic, more people and light commercial development along the town's major roads. The town's 11,330 residents are served by six religious denominations that are located within its boundaries.

The school system is composed of five schools including three elementary schools, a middle school and a high school. The total school population is perceptibly increasing after declining gradually for many years. Currently there are almost 2,100 students enrolled in the school system.

Until the previous five years, town support for the schools was strong. Budgets were regularly passed without much disagreement. Then, as economic conditions started a downturn, taxpayers began to hold referendums on the town and school budgets, and budgets were voted down time and again.

This was a new phenomenon in the town's recent history. Until that time the town had a strong history of support for the schools. There were many external issues influencing the town budget. These issues included potential job loses, a decline in real estate values, the enactment of a state income tax, overcrowded schools, increasing enrollment, and future projected enrollment increases. Additional issues included a constitutional amendment imposing a cap on state spending, deferring the increasing tax burden to the local governments, and a demonstrated conservatism on the part of the board of finance and board of selectman concerning the fiscal policies of the town and the budget procedures of the board of education. During the previous two years an "anti-tax increase" group was successful in lobbying for no tax increase or a smaller increase than the town boards wanted. The organizers were small in number, but had a profound impact on the budget and budget process.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer is currently employed as a music teacher in the middle school. Responsibilities include teaching three sections of basic music, two bands, ensembles, cafeteria duty, and stage band. The majority of non instructional time is devoted to the instrumental component of the program. Having taught in the school district for 25 years, the writer has been able to develop music into a highly respected curriculum in town. Recognition for this program has been given to the writer by music colleagues in other towns. The writer has been and is actively involved in committees and organizations that support education, music, and instrumental music.

The school's population for the 1994-1995 school year averaged about 490 students in a grade 6-8 configuration. There have been some significant enrollment fluctuations that have impacted schedules due to the limitations of the facility of the middle school during the previous 20 years. In 1983 the junior high school started a three year phase in of all the sixth graders to the middle school. Each year one elementary school sent their sixth graders to the middle school. This process was successfully completed due to community support, the quality of the staff, and the tradition as an excellent school within the town. As enrollment increased in 1989 modular classrooms were added to the school as a temporary measure to alleviate the overcrowding. In 1990 a new middle school proposal that would have contained grades 5-8 in two houses was sent to a referendum and rejected by an overwhelming majority of the voters. The educational plans were eliminated and in 1992 a proposal to add classrooms to an elementary school to house the town's fifth and sixth graders was approved by the voters. The significance of these developments was the middle school continued to operate as a middle school for the 1994-1995 school year, but at the beginning of the 1995-1996 school year, students in grade 6 will have moved back to an elementary facility. The existing middle school will once again become a two grade school.

The impact of the budget crisis in the town could not be overlooked as the prominent player in the retrenchment of some programs, or the complete elimination of other programs in the schools. This led to conflict between the boards of selectman, finance, and education due to budget and spending priorities. Many teachers were upset about the devastation the cuts had made and continue to make to the schools, especially dealing with regular and special non-mandated programs. The teachers have continued to find ways to make

the learning opportunities for students positive and effective, as everyone strives for improvement by looking for new ways to deliver the same quality of instruction with less money expended for education by the town.

The 1993-1994 school budget saw a 2% reduction in total allocation compared to the previous educational budget, with an increase in the student population. There were four budget referendums in town before the budget passed with just an 18 vote majority out of approximately 2,000 votes cast during the fourth referendum in 1993. In 1994 the school system had to wait for budget approval, until the fourth referendum passed the budget, by a small majority once again. The approved town budget had an increase of 5% in the proposed education budget. This was the first increase in five years.

Parents did not want programs cut or eliminated for their own children, but had not come out in large numbers to pass the budget in recent years. There were two groups in town who formally organized for increased funding or no increase in funding for programs. School parent organizations have supported education and the town budget and there was a taxpayers group that did not want to see taxes increased for *any* reason. The percentage of the town's money that was allocated for education had been decreasing while it had been increasing for town services during the previous 20 years. In the 1992-1993 school year all town employees voted to take a one year wage freeze in exchange for job security and no program cuts. An underlining issue concerning the budget process was that citizens were still calling for teacher's salaries to be frozen, as demonstrated by signs posted around the town before the budget referendums. Because of the stagnant economic situation in the state and the town, the immediate budgetary future will continue to remain

uncertain. The challenge for schools, like business, was and continues to be, to find innovative ways to do more with limited increases or the same funds.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The situation that needed improvement dealt specifically with the elimination of the in-school activity program at the middle school. For many years a comprehensive activity program was offered during the last period of the school day. The 1994-1995 school year brought with it the potential for the elimination of activities, or an extremely limited activity program at the middle school due to a number of reasons. A review of the activity program specifically at the middle school, highlighting how the program was set up while the school was a junior high, the changes in the program that evolved during the transition to a middle school, and the subsequent operation of the middle school, are necessary for understanding why the problem exists today.

Prior to 1983 the seventh and eighth grades were housed at the junior high school. The school operated on a five day schedule with six academic classes and a daily activity period. Activities were held on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday with Tuesday and Thursday reserved for sustained silent reading. The activities were relatively easy to schedule and there was ample space in the facility to carry out the activities in the three day format.

During the transition years from 1983-1986 the sixth graders from the three elementary schools were assimilated into the middle school. An additional academic period was added to the school day, (reducing the minutes per class period) in order to find enough classroom space to house the additional students and institute all programs required for the three grade levels. During the transition period a number of changes were made in the school and in the activity program. Grade enrollments dropped from a high of 170 students per grade to a low of 120 students per grade from 1980-1990.

Staffing during the transition process in the 1980s did not increase proportionately to the building's population change during the transition period. By 1992-1993 the replacement of staff was not equal to the number of staff retiring or leaving. The beginning of the decade of the 1990s saw increasing student population at the middle school and decreasing allotments of money to the board of education.

To handle new programs and the increasing student population, the middle school went from a traditional five, then a six, and finally a seven day cycle. The additional number of academic periods and the increase in the days of the cycles led to some program reductions in terms of the time offered or the number of classes offered during the school year. This led to increased enrollment in individual classes. There was a direct impact on the activity program. Due to the ever increasing complexity of scheduling the activity program was (a) offered everyday, (b) different activities were offered quarterly, then in trimesters and (c) in the 1993-1994 school year were offered in semesters.

Because of the budget reductions, the middle school was forced to use less staff and limited facilities which resulted in the elimination of some elective

courses. The seven period academic day, the elimination of courses, and the seven day cycle all caused a large increase in the number of students in study halls. Many students had up to three study halls a day. This led to a barrage of parental and staff complaints. Additionally, the new principal was making "teaming" a priority in the school.

These aforementioned problems led to the decision to eliminate the activity period. The 1994-1995 school year saw a seven period academic day with "X" periods for performance groups (band, chorus) while the remaining students were in homerooms. Subsequently during the school year the seventh and eighth grade teams organized some activities for the students who were not in band and chorus during "X" period.

There were many issues that were undergirding what was wrong for the children. These issues transcended into concerns. Yearly the budget problems left the interscholastic sports program in limbo until the budget was approved and the board of education made its final cuts. Limited funds were tentatively available for a small intramural program that met a few weeks a year in between the interscholastic sports program, if these funds were not reduced. The budget was an underlining cause of increased discipline problems at the middle school due to the large study halls and the frequency of study halls for large numbers of students.

A common complaint of students was having nothing to do after school if they were not involved in interscholastic sports. Additionally, there were students going home to empty houses for varying lengths of time because both parents were working and some students lived in single parent households.

During the previous two years, the neighboring town developed a gang presence. For example, near the end of the 1993-1994 school year a 16 year

old was murdered at home in the middle of the afternoon. This child's home is less than one mile from the writer's middle school. Local newspapers were full of reports on related gang activities and drive by shootings have begun to appear in the suburbs. During the summer of 1994 the neighboring town imposed a curfew on children and many other towns had begun discussing the benefits and drawbacks of teen curfews. Area recreation officials held an informal 'summit' to share information on finding the right kinds of activities, ways to get volunteers into the programs, and discussion of youth gangs and teenage violence (Braine, 1994).

The problem was there were few supervised after school activities and no in school activities for the majority of adolescents who were not involved in the interscholastic sports program.

Problem Documentation

At the middle school the interscholastic sports offerings included boys and girls soccer, boys and girls basketball, boys baseball and girls softball, cheerleading and coed cross-country. Cross-country was the only sport allowing sixth graders to participate. The interscholastic sports program had approximately 165 participants during the 1993-1994 school year from a total student body of approximately 480 students. Many students participated in two sports and some participated in three sports. For the entire school year at least one-fourth of the student body participated in interscholastic sports.

The lens became clearer when the sports were analyzed by season. The fall season had the most participants. There were 25 students on each of the boys and girls soccer teams and there were 45 students on the cross-country

team. There were 95 students participating in middle school interscholastic sports program, which composed 20% of the total student body. In the winter sports there were 25 students on the girls and boys basketball teams and 12 students on the cheerleading team for 37 winter sports participants and 8% of the total student body. The spring offered girls softball and boys baseball with 30 participants on both teams and 6% of the total student body. The program participation looked quite different when presented by season. Keep in mind the sixth graders participated in only one sport and of the numbers reviewed some students were dual and triple participants.

Staff members led student activities before or after school in drama, stage band, and student council. The activities had approximately 80 participants or 17% of the students at the school. The drama program involved 15 students for a period of 6 weeks with 3% of the students participating. The stage band involved 25 students for a 12 week period or 5% of the students. The student council had 40 participants meeting once a month for seven meetings and 8% of the students in the school participating. In some activities like sports there were students involved in two or more activities. Some of these students were also involved in interscholastic sports.

By using Eisner's connoisseurship model of evaluation (Popham, 1993) the writer observed the majority of students did not participate in any before or after school sports or activities. Those participants in sports and activities, in many cases, were involved in two or more student events. The money spent and the programs offered were for only a small percentage of the student population.

In the 1993-1994 school year the eighth period was used exclusively for the activity program and some music performance groups. The program

operated on a seven day cycle with students participating in an average of two activities every seven days. Obviously some students participated daily and others did not participate. Students were able to participate or elect activities from a wide array of choices (see Appendix A). This program was eliminated because the school administration utilized a seven period schedule for the 1994-1995 year instead of the eight period schedule used in previous years.

Causative Analysis

There were many reasons underlying the problem. Some of the causes carried a greater significance than others in the development of the problem. However, the interrelationship of the causes led to the problem being critical for the 1994-95 school year.

The cumulative effects of budget reductions over the previous five years had impacted the total school budget where staffing was the only area to examine for significant reductions. For example, the proposed board of education budget for the 1994-1995 school year showed a 6.2% increase before the document was sent to the board of finance. The budget was submitted to the town for referendum. Finally, a fourth referendum passed the budget by a 44 vote majority in the beginning of August 1994. The board of education budget showed a 5% increase compared to the 1993-94 budget which showed a 2% decrease in comparison to the 1992-93 budget. The 1992-93 budget did not increase in comparison to the 1991-92 budget. However, programs and positions were all guaranteed during the 1992-93 school year because all town employees agreed to a one year wage freeze. Personnel costs comprised 80 to 85% of each year's educational budget. Staffing reductions or no increase in

staff even with student increases have resulted in decreased programs and opportunities for children.

The overwhelming defeat of the proposed new middle school planned to domicile grades 5-8 in two houses led to changes in programs and schedules because of overcrowding in the present facility. Moving to an eight period day and a seven day cycle were ways of coping with overcrowding.

The external pressure on the principal to incorporate teaming in an overcrowded, understaffed facility, the pressure from parents to curtail study halls, and the indirect pressure from the state (mastery testing) for increased academic performance have taken their toll on the academic and elective priority list in the school. The result was more class time, less study halls and no activities for the 1994-1995 year.

An underlying cause of the problem was the lack of a clear vision for the middle school. Some factors included (a) the transition from a junior high school to a middle school, (b) the retirement of the previous principal, who led the school for 25 years, (c) changes in philosophies and priorities during the last two years with the new principal, (d) the movement of the middle school from a 6-8 configuration into a grade 7-8 school for the 1995-1996 school year, and (e) a top-down administrative approach has led to the lack of teacher empowerment in the transition process with a subsequent decline in morale and motivation. Because a clear vision was not in front of the staff to focus on the changes, this led to confusion on the part of staff members concerning roles, responsibilities, and philosophies of the kind of school to have for adolescents.

The external stakeholders (the board of finance, the board of selectman, and parents) have all contributed indirectly to the problem by the

retrenchment of funding for education. The change in thinking of no increase in taxes, smaller increases in state money, and differing priorities of local government figures has led to program reductions and some program elimination in town.

There were two major tenets that have led to the problem. Externally the national, state and local economic problems have led to budget restrictions and major educational budget reductions had an indirect relationship to the cause of the problem. Internally, factors that led to the cause of the problem have included (a) no clear vision, (b) change was happening at the middle school, (c) there was a lame duck superintendent, and (d) there has been short sighted planning relative to school facilities. The crime was all of the decisions mentioned did not emulate from what was best for each student learner, but from all external sources, where barriers had to be overcome to do what the research says was right for adolescents.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

There were two themes that kept reappearing in the literature. The first focused on "unsupervised children" and the second dealt with the concept of "community." Much has been written about latchkey children and/or what children do after school.

In the review of the literature Padilla and Landreth (1989) determined problems exist for working parents, particularly with older children due to school and work schedules not corresponding. Padilla and Landreth found there were not many after school programs for these children and many day care centers did not accept older children. This finding corresponded with part of the

problem in the writer's school relating to the few after school supervised activities. Many middle school students are embarrassed if they need, or one of their parents requires them to have other adult care until one parent comes home. A large percentage of children were home without adult supervision at least one day a week, with 80% of the seventh and eighth graders and 65% of the fourth and fifth graders falling into the unsupervised category. Additionally, the number of unsupervised children has been increasing because more women have been entering the work force. Padilla and Landreth (1989) found there were more single parent families, smaller families, and less adult caretakers Long and Long (1989) found during the previous 20 years as parental supervision declined, violent and negative behavior increased.

"Hang out." Eat and sleep." Take care of my cousins." Watch TV." "Nothing. My Mom makes me go home and keep the door locked" (Shine, 1989, p. 10). These were common answers given by adolescents in 1989 when asked what they did after school. These answers gave a realistic focus on the lack of supervision and organized activities available to adolescents then and today. Seventh and eighth grade children who were unsupervised after school ranked being bored, wasting time and not finishing their homework and chores as their greatest concerns (Padilla & Landreth, 1989). Many latchkey children did not participate in after school activities due to parental restrictions or lack of transportation. When children did participate in school activities they hung around after the activity was completed (Long & Long, 1989). In many cases waiting for parents to take students home after school functions could be just as frustrating for the adolescent as the teacher. This was and continues to be due to one parent homes, busy schedules or work schedules that cause transportation time difficulties for the student, teacher, and parent.

Glinski (1993) found in her small private school, a major concern of bright mothers was how to justify whether or not to have a career. Whether the mothers pursued a career or not, they wanted their children to be physically active, participate in enrichment activities, have time for social interaction, have an attentive adult role model available, and have homework completed before leaving school in an extended day program.

Study after study showed problems or the potential for problems with adolescents who were left unsupervised. There were numerous variables dealt with in analyzing the data. Time and again the literature showed, to some degree, that adolescents were at greater risk for some type of antisocial or behavioral problems without some type of activities supervised by adults to take up their idle time. Steinburg (1986) found the adolescents who were more removed from adult supervision (proximal or distal) after school were found to be more susceptible to peer pressure and to engage in antisocial behavior. Fern (1989) saw the susceptibility of adolescents to anti-social behaviors, to injuries from accidents, and an increase in sexual activity or abuse stemming from unsupervised settings. As Steinburg indicated, the longer adolescents were left unsupervised the greater the susceptibility to at risk behaviors. The West Virginia Education Association (1993) predicted the number of at risk students would increase because of increased class size and the breakdown of the family. Additionally, in the Van Nelson, Thompson, Rice and Cooley (1991) study the indication was when a student had not been involved in after-school activities there was a stronger likelihood that substance abuse would be higher.

The point became obvious that unsupervised time with nothing to do could lead to greater at risk behavior. All of the studies cited indicated that

some type of involvement in programs or activities, or holding after school programs and/or activities is a way of preventing some of the problems of the adolescents (Padilla & Landreth, 1989; Long & Long, 1989; Glinski, 1993; Steinburg, 1989; Fern, 1989; West Virginia Education Association, 1993; Van Nelson et al., 1991). There was a great deal of literature focusing on after school programs aimed either at high-risk students or inner-city students, not with adolescents in predominately middle and upper-middle class white communities.

The Carnegie Council On Adolescent Development (1989) stated adolescence is characterized by exploratory behavior and Garvin (1989) presented many arguments about exploratory subjects being essential ingredients in the middle school. The elimination of the in-school activity program severely curtailed many students access to hands on and exploratory activities that were supervised by adults. Adolescents need to acquire (a) self-esteem, (b) flexible and inquiring habits of mind, (c) close human relationships, (d) a sense of belonging and usefulness in a valued group, (e) the use of their inherent curiosity and exploratory energy, and (f) the capacity to make informed deliberate decisions (Carnegie Council On Adolescent Development, 1989). One of the recommendations of the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development was to connect schools with communities. Part of this concept was the idea of shared responsibility where the resources from within the community can be utilized. Additionally, the Carnegie Council On Adolescent Development suggested expanding the opportunity for learning by utilizing youth service, community-based activities and exploratory courses or athletics.

At the middle school students who were good at sports participated in interscholastic athletics, but the majority of students were non-participants. Exploratory courses were offered in unified arts consisting of art, music, tech-ed, computers and home economics. The elimination of the in-school activity program would limit the number of exploratory options for these students who need exploratory activities during adolescent development. Youth service and community based activities have been fragmented, coming from the scouts and church organizations in town.

Silcox (1993) stated that part of the school restructuring movement involved community service as part of its mission to meet the needs of society. Silcox saw schools as talent bases for the community, where students may have the opportunity to learn more about themselves, subject areas and society without being restricted to a traditional classroom setting. There were two benefits to community service as Silcox saw from his school. These included attributes of good citizenship and the responsibility to solve problems in the communities by using resources from within the community.

The research showed supervision after school has been a concern for parents and for some children. Exploratory and community have been two important words that reappeared in the literature concerning adolescents. Garvin (1989) saw exploratory activities and subjects as an avenue to motivate students in the basic subjects and the Carnegie Council On Adolescent Development (1989) and Silcox (1993) saw the community as a valuable resource in solving school and student problems that have been untapped over the years.

There were many underlying causes of the problem, which included recommendations for more testing or accountability, more academic time to

improve student performance, and less funding that has led to a negative impact on exploratory activities, exploratory courses (unified arts), and programs due to time and budget constraints. The problem of few or no activities for adolescents at the middle school for the 1994-1995 school year related to (a) a philosophical direction taken by the principal, due to the aforementioned underlying causes which were undergirded by local pressure (parents, board of education, superintendent, staff, politics, special interest groups) and (b) the principal's knowledge and philosophy of what was most important for the students given the conditions in the town and at the middle school.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following goals and outcomes were projected for this practicum. The goal was to establish an exploratory activity program with the potential for involvement of all middle school students, not just athletes. Based on the first goal, there were two secondary goals.

Secondary goals were to utilize the resources from within the community such as older students (high school), senior citizens, businesses, and parents in addition to the traditional use of teachers. Schools need to become community resources for student learners. By offering an after school activity program, the final goal was to develop the concept of the middle school as the center providing a plethora of services to meet the various educational, health, and social needs of the students and their families in a non-fragmented setting. The community includes parents, staff, students, administration, board of education, businesses, government services, the townspeople, and the governance structure of the town. The expectation was for the middle school students to receive a similar activity program in comparison to what the

students had in the past, in terms of the variety and number of activities offered on any given day.

Expected Outcomes

There were three major outcomes pursued in attempting to find a solution to the problem. These expectations included (a) to provide a different program involving 300 out of 500 students, (b) to have five parents, five teachers, five high school students, and five business people lead activity sessions, and (c) to offer nine different activities for students, for each day a program is offered.

Measurement of Outcomes

Collecting data and analyzing the material was critical to making judgments about whether the projected outcomes would be achieved. Outcome one stated there would be a different program involving 300 out of 500 students. The evaluation would be accomplished by comparing the number of students involved in after school programs in 1993-1994 to the number of students involved in after school programs during the 1994-1995 school year. This comparison would be done by comparing the number of students on the lists and rosters from the 1993-1994 school year to the number of students on the lists and rosters for 1994-1995. The writer would accept as demonstrating success an increase in the number of students involved in after school

programs during the 1994-1995 school year as compared to the 1993-1994 school year.

Outcome two stated there would be five parents, five teachers, five high school students, and five business people leading activity sessions. Evaluation of outcome two would be accomplished by charting the number of people who led activities in the 1993-1994 program and comparing the 1993-1994 number to the number of people who led activities in the 1994-1995 program. The writer will accept as demonstrating success, more people outside of the internal school offering activities than teachers, after the Practicum implementation.

Outcome three was to offer nine different student activities, for each day a program is offered. Evaluation would be accomplished by counting the number of different activities offered for each day of the program and comparing the number to the average daily number of activities offered to students during the 1993-1994 school year. The writer would accept as demonstrating success the same number of activities offered per day in 1994-1995 as compared to the number of activities per day during 1993-1994 school year.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

There were few supervised after school activities and no in school activities at the middle school for the majority of adolescents who were not involved in the interscholastic sports program. The problem for the 1994-1995 school year became acute for a variety of reasons. The reasons included severe overcrowding in a school that was understaffed. The elimination of eighth period for the 1994-1995 school year caused the complete elimination of the activity program, that was quite successful for many years at the middle school. The activity program gave the adolescent students the opportunity to explore a variety of different activities outside of the traditional classroom (see Appendix A). What could be done? How could one give exploratory activities outside of the unified arts area to students? What could students do after school, who do not participate in interscholastic sports ? There were many successful ideas, programs and concepts that have been working throughout the country and the world. Understanding these programs and weaving the best of each into a potential solution for the problem, was explored.

As stated in Chapter 2, two themes seemed to re-occur in the literature. The first concerned "unsupervised children" particularly after school, and the second theme focused on the concept of "community." Many towns and schools have been and continue to work together to provide various types of after school programs for adolescents.

The Connecticut Task Force on the Education of Early Adolescents (1991) found the greatest area of need was to connect schools with the communities. Some of the recommendations this task force made included:

> 1. Collaborate with community agencies to get information out to parents.
>
> 2. Consider asking parent volunteers to assist in coordinating school and/or community service projects.
>
> 3. Consider utilizing assistance from grandparents and senior citizen volunteers.
>
> 4. Encourage the participation of businesses in the educational program, e.g. through mentor programs that bring together employees or businesses and students who need guidance from caring adults.
>
> 5. Work together with community organizations to assist students in becoming more aware of the community needs and ways in area service projects (pp. 20-21).

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) focused on the need for middle schools "to operate at the center of a network of community resources that includes local government, health services, youth-serving organizations, private businesses, and the philanthropic sector" (p. 32). The expansion of the opportunity for learning was critical and for many students excellence may not be achieved in core academic subjects but in exploratory courses, or outside the school through youth service and other types of community based activities.

Jacoby (1987) stated research showed young adolescents need environments in and out of school that provide (a) structure and clear limits, (b) opportunities for positive social interaction with peers and adults, (c) opportunities to display competence and achievement, (d) opportunities to participate meaningfully in school and community, and (e) outlets for physical activity, creative expression, and self definition. Jacoby asked, "Can after-school experiences be used to support and enrich classroom learning" (p. 1)? Jacoby found the following:

> 1. By collaborating to provide enjoyable and meaningful after-school activities, schools and community agencies can work together to serve young people better.
>
> 2. Establishing connections between schools and after-school programs can encourage and foster middle-grade students' educational and social development.
>
> 3. By developing institutional connections, schools and community agencies can help young adolescents become contributing members of their communities in the after-school hours.
>
> 4. School/after-school connections can draw parents into the schools (pp. 1-2).

Some examples of what Jacoby, the Carnegie Council, and the Connecticut Task Force discussed in relation to schools and communities were beginning to happen. In West Virginia an attempt was made to connect the schools with the communities. These connections were being implemented and carried out in many of the ways recommended by the Carnegie Council and the Connecticut Task Force on Adolescents. The rationale for this connection was the realization that all organizations, institutions, and agencies have a responsibility to make sure the needs of children are met. In many towns and cities, social-service has been provided in a fragmented way with schools serving as the center in children's lives. Combining these has been a way of

connecting and providing services that best meet the needs, values, and concerns of each community (West Virginia Education Association, & Appalachia Educational Lab., 1993). Examples were given of 40 programs in towns in West Virginia who have been attempting to meet after school needs through different community partnerships.

Louis Armstrong Middle School utilized a local college for a community-based organization that tutors students before and after school (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). The H.U.G.S.S. (Helping Us Grow Through Service And Smiles) program utilized a complementary educational process involving the individual, the school, the community, and the home in preparing students to live effectively in today's world. The H.U.G.S.S. program helped guide each student's growth in character development, social skills, knowledge of career possibilities, and productive and effective living as an integral part of the larger community, by the school adopting a community agency or project every school year (Andrus & Joiner, 1989). Schine, Bianco, and Seltz (1992) discussed the advantages of service learning enabling young adolescents to get out of the classroom and into the community. Schine, et al. found adolescents can learn about (a) responsibility, (b) caring, (c) civic duties, (d) their community, and (e) human relationships as they become valuable contributing members of their community.

Other programs included the Early Adolescent Helper Program that initiated age-appropriate programs encouraging growth, and provided access to activities and environments which met the developmental needs of the early adolescent (Schine, 1989). Hovland (1990) discussed middle level activity programs with 10 criteria for an intramural program that has run in combination with an activities program. The essential ingredient which made

this program successful was the same philosophy for the athletic events, academic programs, and non-academic activities. The programs discussed show the diversity in what can be done to provide exploratory activities meeting the developmental needs of adolescents, using the school as a community base.

Other ideas that have been generated include developing alternate building schedules so the activity program can be offered during the normal school day. The alternative schedule was impossible due to the lack of facilities, the overcrowding problem and limited staff. The literature gave examples of programs where students could attend or visit various sites such as businesses and nursing homes around the community, where students could donate community service time such as the Early Adolescent Helper Program, H.U.G.G.S., and in service learning. Difficulties with these concepts were the problem of transportation, due to the rural nature of the community, and lack of funds for any type of student transportation. The aforementioned restrictions indicated the best way to offer the most for students after school would be to bring in the community to the facility.

Another alternative was to develop a "pay for activities" program after school. Fees would be used to pay instructors and other activity leaders for their time working in various exploratory activities with the students. Based on the previous three year history of the community concerning "pay for play" with interscholastic sports, this venture would have been, at the very least quite controversial. The "pay for play" idea would have taken away from the concept of the community giving to each other.

Description Of Selected Solution

An attempt was made to develop an after-school community centered volunteer exploratory activity program that would tap the human resources available in the community such as high school students, senior citizens, parents, and business people. There were a plethora of reasons why a community centered program would work and why a program of this type was needed.

From the review of the literature, community service and involvement of parents and the community have been and continue to be critical for school and student success. The literature supported the fact that adolescents need exploratory courses and group activities to stimulate learning and problem solving. Another theme found in the literature dealt with the concern of unsupervised after school time for students. Some studies showed the main time frame of concern was from 3-6 p.m. There was a need to provide some type of adult supervision of adolescents for the many students who have spent time alone at home after school, due to either a single parent family or both parents working.

The concept of activities was not new to the 1994-1995 school year. Seventh and eighth graders had been involved with the in-school activity program for one or two years. The principal was in support of the after school activity concept. There had been an effort for more parental involvement at the middle school by the creation of the parent teacher school association (PTSA). The community-based volunteer after-school activity program would allow the opportunity to increase instructional time for the students while still

providing exploratory activities for all of the students who would choose to partake in the program.

Three themes reappeared in the literature (a) unsupervised children after school, (b) the concept of community, and (c) before and/or after school programs for children. There were many different types of programs and organizations of after-school site based programs for adolescents. A review of these programs helped crystallize the lens so the writer could take the best from each program in the development of an after school volunteer activity program. From the review of literature many ideas were generated and transferred into this problem solving activity.

Ryan (1994) reported that in New Milford, Connecticut a plan was developed to hold programs after school with volunteer help. Due to budget reductions, the enrichment program in the schools was reduced from a staff of four to one. The program started small with a pilot program being held one afternoon a week for four weeks. Then the program expanded to an after school enrichment program four days a week for one month. In Atlanta, an after-school program was established to provide supervised learning and enriching experiences for the children who had no after-school supervision (Popwell, 1991). Some of the objectives were (a) to assist with homework, (b) provide creative cultural and physical activities, (c) teach safety and self-care skills, and (d) utilize support of the community through human and material support in a supervised setting in the child's local school. A concern of parents, teachers and students has been students doing their homework. In Atlanta, one of the objectives was to assist with homework in the after-school program.

In the Strathclyde Region of Glasgow, Scotland the secondary schools started supported study sessions for older students before and after school

(MacBeath, 1993). The rationale for these centers arose out of the same concerns about children in Glasgow that were in the United States. The students liked the supported study sessions because the sessions were places to work free from distractions, where there were books and materials with teacher help, if needed. At the primary schools the supported study concept took on a different flavor. These schools chose to offer programs which included a wide range of activities. Student participation grew, parents saw positive changes in their children, and teachers supported the after-school program. The key finding attributed to the program's success was its voluntary nature. Additionally these programs supported a more relaxed atmosphere, a greater willingness to learn from the pupils, and if something did not work it was not done or changed (MacBeath). In restructuring schools the research was in agreement of empowering teachers and staff. Another reason for the success of the Strathclyde program was the framework had been outlined, not detailed, leaving the teachers and the schools empowerment to design and carry out the supported study programs. Empowerment led to many program variations and success, because programs were designed out of the local needs and interests of the students.

The common web of the three programs mentioned all fit neatly into the parameters and needs at the writer's middle school. In New Milford budget problems with reduction in staff led to the formation of a pilot volunteer after school program. Atlanta's program was framed out of the need for supervision that utilized the human and material resources of the community after school. In Glasgow, the study centers original purpose was to provide an after school setting for students to do homework. The success of the program came from the local school empowerment and the voluntary nature of the program.

The process used in the development of a community-based volunteer after-school activity program for the middle school involved 10 steps. These steps included:

1. To review the previous activity programs at the middle school and study other schools that have an after school or community based program.
2. To develop a plan to invite the community to offer services through newsletters, mailings and notices in the newspapers, and public service announcements on the local cable network.
3. To communicate with the administration, teachers, parents, and students about the new activity program, the potential electives, and the times the program will take place.
4. This step involved designing and sending out the volunteer activity forms. Included in the forms were what activity the volunteers would like to do, the amount of time required, the maximum number of students permitted in the activity sessions, the facility needed, and any supplies and/or materials needed to carry out the activity.
5. The data on the forms returned from the prospective activity volunteers were compiled and collated.
6. Based on the data from the prospective activity volunteers, an activity sign-up form was developed for students, where they chose the activities they would like to participate in.
7. Based on the data from the students and the activity volunteers an after-school schedule was developed for the students stating the times and what activities the students would be participating in. The schedule

along with a permission slip was sent home enabling the students to stay after-school and be a participate in the activity program.

8. This step involved designing, sending and compiling data from a simple questionnaire from the students to evaluate their activities.

9. A simple questionnaire was designed and sent to the volunteer activity leaders, where the activity leaders indicated ways to improve the community-based volunteer after-school activity program. The results were compiled and analyzed to find ways to improve the program.

10. This step was ongoing and critical for the activity program's success. The purpose was to remind the writer to start small and expand the offerings and time frame gradually as the community-based volunteer after-school activity program for the middle school evolved.

By following the 10 steps previously mentioned, and by utilizing the ideas, concepts and parts of various programs to help adolescents the writer expected to (a) develop a different program involving 300 out of the 500 students at the middle school, (b) use a minimum of five volunteers from each category of parents, teachers, high school students, and business people to lead activities, and (c) offer nine different activities for each day the program was offered.

Report of Action Taken

The implementation of this practicum required many preliminary steps. Due to the elimination of the in-school activity program a need for some type of activity program was apparent. The middle school principal felt there was a

concern of parents about their children being home by themselves during the afternoon especially during the window of 3-6 p.m. This view was supported by the literature. The middle school had a model in-school activity program until the 1994-1995 school year. Reviewing the material and conferring with the creator and coordinator of the in-school activity program, led to many ideas used in the formation of the community-based volunteer after-school activity program. By reviewing the literature on other after-school programs, ideas were gleaned that were useful in the establishment of an activity program that would meet the needs of the community where the writer was employed. In discussion with the principal a frame work of dates, the number of activity dates within each session, and the number of sessions were established before the program was presented to the community.

An analysis of the school calendar was done which took into consideration school vacations, school functions and the limitations of time. The writer's power base was reviewed in the establishment of a pilot program that would have the potential of future expansion. Based on the analysis and review it was decided to have two 5 week sessions. Because the school was located in New England snow and ice storms were always a concern. The first session started in January after the holiday recess, and continued until two weeks before the winter vacation. This schedule allowed a two week make-up period in the event of cancellation due to inclement weather. The second session was scheduled from March into mid April with the culmination of the program before spring break. An additional late spring session was contemplated but decided against due to little league, softball, and many other events students were involved in such as dance recitals, field trips and special events offered by the town and school. There was also the concern of being

able to secure adequate numbers of volunteers from the pool of high school students and adults during this hectic time of the year.

Once the dates were selected the writer needed to communicate the after-school activity plan to other people in the community to enlist support. The process involved searching out people with the appropriate power base to help the program. Key people included the high school principal, the chair of the town business alliance, the middle school parent organization, the directors of human services and recreation departments, and key people within the community who had shown a history of involvement with children.

Gaining approval to use high school students required the permission of the high school principal who in the past was not supportive of new ideas from the middle school. A guidance counselor who was highly respected by both the middle and high school administration was asked and volunteered to be the liaison between the school since the counselor worked at both schools. The counselor approached the high school principal and laid the groundwork about the benefits of the program for the community and in particular the high school students. Following this process, a meeting was held in the guidance counselor's office and the principal was surprisingly supportive of the concept. The high school students were made aware of the programs through two venues. Morning announcements were made at the high school. The announcements explained the program and gave students the time of an informational meeting where the writer and guidance counselor would explain the program and hand out the cover letter with the sign-up forms. Some students became aware of the need for volunteers through their younger brothers and sisters who attended the middle school or from their families who received a middle school newsletter.

Much time was spent in addressing various groups and individuals in town. At a weekly breakfast meeting, forms for the program were distributed to the town business alliance. The forms included a cover letter explaining the concept and the need for the program, the times and dates, a sign-up form (see Appendix B), and titles of previous activities. Each cover letter was titled to focus on the group who was being recruited and altered if necessary to personalize the cover letter to the potential volunteer audience. Other groups addressed included the board of education, the parent teacher school association, and the local chamber of commerce. Meetings were held with the director of human resources and the director of recreation to gain support. Phone calls were made to key players in local businesses who were identified by the business alliance and others in town as community minded individuals. The cover letter and sign-up form were put in the local newspapers, left in visible places in town and with individuals who worked with students, businesses, senior citizens and adults. Additionally a feature article on the program was done by a major newspaper explaining the program and asking for volunteers to call the school. At the middle school a weekly newsletter went home with the students every Friday. The after-school activity program was introduced by the principal in the newsletter and the sign-up material went home attached to the newsletters with each student.

Sign-ups were done during homeroom in school. The assistant principal explained the program and reviewed the scope and nature of the activity selections (see Appendix C) over the intercom. The students took the packet home to have parents sign the forms with the students' activity selections. Based on the data from the student sign-up form a schedule was developed that included lists of students for the various activities that stated the location

and time of the activities. These lists were posted in the corridors in the school. All of the volunteers were called. Discussion concerned (a) the reaffirmation of volunteering, (b) the review of the dates and times, (c) the number of students signed-up for the activity, (d) the location, and (e) questions were asked about any special needs or concerns the volunteers had. On the dates before the program, morning announcements were made at the middle school reminding students of the program. In the weekly newsletter to parents, the dates and times of the program appeared before and during the program.

Administratvely a number of procedures were initiated to insure the smooth operation of the program. At the first session name tags, materials requested, refreshments, student rosters, and directions were set up for the volunteers. Attendance was taken at each class by the activity instructors. Refreshments were placed in each class based on the number of students present. The volunteers were housed in the library which served as a meeting place for those people. The coordinator of the program made rounds in the building during the activities to make sure there were no problems.

During the first 5 week session the two largest area newspapers were invited to the school. Both newspapers came and did articles featuring the program near and at the culmination of the session. What added credibility to the newspaper articles were the positive comments from the children and the endorsement of the program by quotes from the town power brokers including the first selectman, the middle school principal, a board of finance member and the recreation director. The positive comments served as the prelude in securing the necessary local political support to continue the program during the 1995-1996 school year.

The boards of finance, education, and selectman were invited to observe the after-school program. Representatives from all of the boards except the board of education observed the program. The directors of human service and the recreation department also viewed the program. The recreation department secured a small grant to provide a late bus and refreshments. The late bus left after the second activity class session at 5:30 p.m. dropping students off at each of the schools in town.

On the last day of session I and session II special culminating activities took place such as drama and dance presentations, and a pizza party. Last day instructions, questionnaires and thank-you letters were given to all of the volunteer instructors. Student questionnaires were filled out by the students in the 2:30 p.m. activity class. Parent questionnaires were sent home with the school newsletter to all parents after the completion of the first session. The information was collated and comments transcribed. The results were sent to the principal, the selectman, the human service director, the recreation director and the board of education.

The 19 high school volunteers were given a recognition breakfast at the high school. The students were quite enthusiastic and all were willing to work in session II if they did not have conflicts. Many of the high school students were involved in spring sports and could not participate, but reminded the writer they were looking forward to participation as volunteer instructors in the activity program during the following school year.

Based on the positive data in the surveys minor modifications to the program were made based particularly on the narrative suggestions. For session II the process described for session I was repeated. There was an extremely tight time frame to pull together questionnaire results and set up

the second session. Included in this period was winter break that made it difficult in some instances to communicate with various organizations and individuals in the process of recruiting volunteers.

The momentum for support of the continuation of the after-school activity program escalated when the first selectman visited the after-school activity program and instructed the recreation and human service department to develop a budget proposal to include funds for the continuation and expansion of the program for the 1995-1996 fiscal year. The proposal was presented to the board of finance.

On March 7, 1995 the board of finance had its first public hearing on the 1995-1996 budget. The chairman of the board of finance praised the after-school activity program and stated the program may be able to receive some funds from the board of finance. On March 8, 1995 the writer and the middle school principal presented a report about the after-school program to the board of education. As stated in Chapter 2 there had been budget battles which resulted in reduction of programs and the elimination of other educational programs due to the town not approving budgets until they were reduced. As alluded to previously, this led to an escalation of a lack of trust between the various boards in town.

At the board of education meeting the presentation was quietly applauded by most members of the school board. One school board member challenged the program because the board of finance always cuts the board of education budget. A member of the board of finance who was an after-school activity volunteer elucidated to the writer, others in town, and the newspaper that if money was given to the board of education for the activity program the money would not be spent on the after-school activity program. The influential

volunteer saw the after-school program filling a non-academic that would not be filled by education policy-makers.

As a result of the newspaper article and the complaints filed by the school board member the first selectman initiated a meeting to (a) discuss and clarify issues, (b) review, discuss, and decide the future direction of the after-school activity program, and (c) defuse the increasing tension appearing once again with the boards in town. Inherent in recent years was the lack of trust between the town boards. A framework of where the program should go and a definition of who would handle what responsibilities were clarified. The results of the meeting included:

1. The formation of a governing board, where a representative from every town board and agency would meet to communicate about the after-school activity program clarifying roles and responsibilities of each agency and board.
2. The continuation of increased cooperation among the various town boards that were beginning to work in unison for the children of the town.
3. Agreement on the need for a town youth coordinator, and the continuation and expansion of the after-school activity program.

Letters were sent to governor and the chair of the house and senate education committees inviting them to view the program and requesting a meeting with those people at the conclusion of the legislative session. During this process a newspaper editorial commended the after-school program and recommended town programs should be judged on program merits, not on whether other program budgets receive money. The suggestion was to work for the children and stop interdepartmental squabbling.

The editorial infuriated a negative school board member. Subsequently at the next board of education meeting, the board member defended his position and publicly admonished the middle school and its administration for ill serving the board of education concerning this program. Controversy increased when the animal rights course was criticized in the local newspaper by another school board member who was a farmer in town and an initial supporter of the after school program. The school board member said animal rights groups attack the way the board member lives. Comments in town included statements (a) relating the animal right's group to communists, (b) the animal rights issue is as sensitive as the abortion issue, and (c) these groups are too fanatical and too right wing. An editorial appeared in the newspaper in support of the program that stated the program is voluntary and school officials are well qualified to make judgments about what is and what is not appropriate for students to study.

The writer found out about the potential for controversy days before the second session was to begin. To alleviate the potential for conflict, and most importantly to protect the students from seeing an emotional one-sided view of animal rights, a meeting was held with the presenters where guidelines were accepted on what would and would not be appropriate for these adolescents. There was agreement to have a member of the school staff present in the animal rights classroom during all of the activity classes. The agreement was quite acceptable to the animal rights presenters and the presenters did an excellent job of presenting sensitive issues to the children.

On the final day of session II students and volunteers were given questionnaires to fill out. The local education association sponsored a pizza party for the children because the association felt the after-school activity

program was an excellent community function. The local senator viewed the program and was so impressed he sent a letter to the state commissioner of education. The letter highlighted some components of the innovative after-school activity program. The senator recommended the department of education view and consider making this program a model for the state.

Even though the activity sessions for the students finished, the political controversy continued. The middle school parent group told the school board to stop the in-fighting and bickering over the after-school program. The controversy has not been publicly resolved. The problems associated with the board of education became part of the strategy for the future of the after-school activity program. The first selectman required the recreation director to coordinate the after-school activity program for the 1995-1996 school year, because the recreation director was respected and trusted by all of the town boards.

In the final stages of the implementation the process involved meeting with the director of recreation who was designated to coordinate the after-school activity program for the 1995-1996 school year. The time was spent supplying information both verbally and in written form about who to contact for volunteers, the administrative and organizational process, the culture of the schools, and suggestions for improvement and efficiency. Much time was spent on the town political process and its ramifications for the successful continuation of the program.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The problem was there were few supervised after-school activities and no in-school activities at the middle school for the majority of adolescents who were not involved in the interscholastic sports program. The problem became acute during the 1994-1995 school year for various reasons. The reasons included (a) severe overcrowding in a school that was understaffed, (b) the elimination of an "eighth period" that caused the complete elimination of the in-school activity program, and (c) the eradication of opportunities for the adolescent students to explore a variety of different activities outside the traditional classroom. The solution strategy utilized was the creation of an after-school community centered volunteer exploratory activity program that used the human resources available in the community. The resources included high school students, senior citizens, parents, teachers, and business people. The use of human resources to offer an enrichment/prevention program was done by offering two 5 week after school activity sessions having two class offerings within each individual session.

Outcome 1 stated there would be a different program involving 300 out of 500 students. Five-hundred students was the projected enrollment for the middle school during the 1994-1995 school year. In reality the enrollment hovered at 485 students. The involvement of 300 students in the program was based on the approximate enrollment figures per day for the previous in-school activity program. The figure of 300 students included students who were involved in band and chorus. Band and chorus were elective classes scheduled during activity time. In session I there were 191 students who signed up for the 2:30 p.m. activities and 105 students who signed up for the 4 p.m. activities. Session I activities were offered during January into February during the basketball season. There were 37 students involved in interscholastic sports and 40 students involved in student council for a total of 268 students who potentially were involved in some type of after school program housed at the middle school. The real number of student participants was lower due to a variety of reasons. The reasons included students (a) absent from school, (b) students who did not bring in permission slips to stay after school, (c) students who were too busy to stay after school on a given day, and (d) students who changed their mind about what they wanted to do. If the number of music students that participated in band and chorus were subtracted from the number of students signed-up to participate in the in-school activity program there would have been approximately 240 potential participants. There were approximately 200 students who participated in some type of after school program.

Session II took place during March and April. There were 136 potential students signed-up for the 2:30 p.m. activities and 74 potential students signed-up for the 4 p.m. activities. While session II took place, some students

were also involved in baseball and softball, intramurals, stage band, drama, and student council. The existing school programs had 130 students signed-up for a total number of 266 students listed as participants in both programs. Taking into account factors previously discussed a realistic figure was about 200 participants in some type of after-school program. As stated in Chapter 3 the writer would accept as demonstrating success an increase in the number of students involved in after school programs during the 1994-1995 school year as compared to the 1993-1994 school year. The increase was achieved. However outcome one as stated, was not achieved because there were not 300 student participants in the after school programs during the 1994-1995 school year compared to 300 student participants in the in-school activity program during the 1993-1994 school year.

Outcome 2 stated there would be five parents, five teachers, five high school students, and five business people leading activity sessions. Outcome 2 was exceeded far beyond the writer's expectations in certain areas and was deficient in other areas. In session I there were 19 high school students who presented at one or more classes, five teachers, seven people from the business community, two parents, and no senior citizens. In session II presenters included 16 people from the business community, eight high school students, three parents, four teachers, and one senior citizen. Overall outcome 2 was achieved because as stated in Chapter 3 the writer would accept as demonstrating success, more people outside of the internal school offering activities than teachers, after the practicum implementation.

Teachers in town and especially at the middle school were not in a voluntary mood because of many external and internal environmental factors. The teachers who participated in the after-school activity program had a

positive experience. The difference in the number of high school students from session I to session II was due to the second session being held during the spring. Many high school students were participating in interscholastic sports. Parents just have not responded to many voluntary acts in recent years at the middle school. For example the parents organization lacks large numbers of active parents, and the music boosters fell apart in 1994-1995 for the first time since its inception 12 years ago. Senior citizens were apprehensive about working with adolescents. The writer was not able to speak at senior citizen functions because most of the functions took place during the day when the writer was teaching classes. The high school students and the business community were the most enthusiastic about the program as demonstrated by the number of participants.

Outcome 3 was to offer nine different student activities, for each day a program is offered. This outcome was based on the data from the previous in-school activity program. The maximum number of activities offered on any given day was nine. In the community-based volunteer after-school activity program for middle school students there were 19 activities offered in session I and 19 activities offered in session II. The 19 activities were the total offered in both class times during sessions I and II. Outcome 3 was met, exceeding the expectations.

Discussion

Even though all of the outcomes were not completely met, the practicum exceeded the writer's initial expectations. Being able to focus on what experts cited in Chapter 2 concerning the needs of children, the examples

cited in Chapter 4 on how to address those needs, and examining what the children in the community needed for a preventative and enrichment program were the ingredients needed for the creation of the aforementioned after school activity program. It was clear from the literature that unsupervised idle time could lead to problems for adolescents.

The connection of schools to the community is vital for student success (Carnegie Council On Adolescent Development, 1989). The review of literature in Chapter 4 served as the springboard in the creation of the program. Three themes in the literature served as the catalyst for the after-school activity program. The themes included (a) unsupervised children after school, (b) the concept of community, and (c) before and/or after school programs for children. There were three school systems where the framework for the community-based volunteer after-school activity program was modeled. In New Milford, Connecticut budget problems with staff reductions led to the formation of a pilot volunteer after-school program. Atlanta's program developed out of the need for adolescent supervision harnessing the human and material resources of the community. In Glasgow, Scotland the school study centers' original purpose was to provide an after school setting for students to do homework. The success of the program came from local school empowerment and the voluntary nature of the program. The vision and framework for the after-school program emulated from the previously described programs and the needs of adolescents coupled with the unique local setting. The point was some type of after-school program was needed. Creating alternative programs for children who have nothing to do after school, and/or who are unsupervised after-school is finally beginning to be seen as an important element within

communities. After-school programs can be done in a cost effective creative manner that meets the unique needs of children in any community.

One of the strengths of the community-based after-school activity program was no limitation placed on what the instructor could offer or who offered the class. The descriptions of the activities, the volunteers and the activity sessions were monitored. The writer did not want to stifle any new, creative methods and/or topics that could be meaningful to adolescents. The strength of the creative aspect of the program led to the controversy previously discussed concerning the offering of an animal rights class in a town where farming takes place. Course offerings that were not interesting or irrelevant to the interests of adolescents did not have large student sign-ups. This was acceptable because one of the underlying purposes of the after-school activity program was the establishment of another adult-child relationship in an area where the child had an interest.

An integral component of the community-based volunteer after-school activity program was the analysis of the information contained in the questionnaires. The questionnaires were sent to parents, volunteers, and student participants at the end of each five week session (see Appendixes D, E, & F for questionnaires). The purpose of the questionnaires was to evaluate (a) the types of activities offered in the after-school activity program, (b) the way the program was offered, (c) if there was a need for the program to continue, and (d) if the need existed what directions should the program take in the future. The results pointed to overwhelming support of the need for and the continuation of the community-based after-school activity program. There was a clear consensus on the continuation of refreshments. However, there were differences on how much money should be charged, if any, for

refreshments. It was clear that two days a week for four 5 week sessions of two classes per session of 1 1/2 hours was the proper direction to move balancing the cost, organizational time, the needs of the students and the school calendar time frame.

The after school program filled a void for some students who were (a) unsupervised at home, (b) were not athletically inclined or interested in sports, and (c) were not involved in other programs or activities either in the private enterprise or at home. Essentially there was a core of students who desperately needed a program like this. The largest number of participants were sixth graders with the least involvement shown by the eighth grade class. The difference in grade level participation could be attributed to a number of factors. The eighth grade class has been "burned out," being tired of everything at the middle school and looking forward to the high school. Additionally there has been a history of an attitude of apathy. The apathy may be indicative of the eighth grade class and not have anything to do with the activity program. The sixth graders at the middle school did not have many special programs or activities to participate in compared to the seventh and eighth graders. The sixth grade attitude about special events, programs, and school work has been positive. The aforementioned reasons may be why there were so many sixth grade participants in the after-school activity program. Also many times students who have done things a certain way are resistant to change claiming it is "uncool" to participate in something new. One has to remember peer pressure with adolescents is a paramount factor in their decision making. Over time the expectation is the older students will have similar numbers involved in the after-school activity program as the younger students. As the participants of the current after-school activity program enter high school, the

intent would be for those students to volunteer like their older peers. The after-school activity program would become self perpetuating, moving in a positive direction based on the previous traditions that were established.

What was most impressive about the program was the spirit of cooperation and help from businesses and high school students. When the writer called on corporations and small businesses they were responsive, direct and flexible. A highlight was watching the high school students take charge. The spirit of both giving and learning was apparent. A problem was when a volunteer could not make a session. The high school students arranged for a substitute if one of the high school volunteers had a conflict or fell ill during the activity day. That demonstrated leadership and commitment!

The political controversies that focused on the after-school activity program signaled the importance of the program to the writer and other child advocates. More importantly to professionals who work with children the town political controversy signified a positive attempt to "put the cards on the table" in the town instead of the problems of the youth being swept under the table. The writer attempted to keep the vision of the program in focus to enable the town boards to work cooperatively for the first time in recent years on an innovative program for children. The after-school activity program was the beginning of less fragmented in-town programs for children. Previously, the unspoken mode of operation was the school and town agency separateness, due to the allocation of fiscal resources. The irony was every town department was attempting to work in the best interests of <u>all</u> of the children competing with each other for scarce resources which limited and fragmented programs for children.

The largest disappointment was the lack of parent volunteers. In questionnaires, parents stated their children had parental supervision most of the time after school. However, most parents were not available to help with the after-school activity program due to work and the time of the program. There was definitely a dichotomy in answers and reasons. Some parents wanted increased time for the program without paying for it. As stated previously, in the previous few years, the residents wanted everything without increased taxation or private payments.

The lack of senior citizen participation was not a major concern. Over time senior participation should increase as more of the seniors hear about and view the program. Many senior citizens were apprehensive about working with these 'wild' adolescents and concerned about driving home after dark. Because of the writer's schedule, it was impossible to go to senior citizen functions which occurred during the school day, to discuss the after-school program and to develop a personal relationship with the seniors that was and is important for recruiting volunteers.

The other major disappointment was the board of education. All of the other boards in town had members either participate or view the after-school activity program. The board of education received two in depth presentations on the program along with written material and sign-up forms; but no one viewed, participated, called or asked about the after-school program. This was a sad commentary on the education policymakers in town.

The final disappointment was the school PTSA. There was an after-school activity volunteer from the PTSA. Some individuals spoke to the board of education in defense of the principal and the after-school activity program, but there was no formal offer of either financial, material, or human help. The

irony was, the stated intent of the school parent group, who raised substantial amounts of money to help all students, did not offer assistance to an innovative pilot program that benefited the children at the school.

From the discussion of the review of literature in Chapter 4 there were many variations an after-school program could take. The community-based volunteer after-school activity program for middle school students was simply a model of one direction to move in a predominately caucasian middle upper-middle class community. To create a similar program would require a vision and a clear understanding of the needs of children in a local area. There is a need for more after-school programs around the country that would provide an environment where learning and exploratory activities could connect children with their community. Is not helping each other what life is about? As adults we must invest in the future to help children successfully grow through the difficult period of adolescence.

Recommendations

There were many recommendations concerning the community-based volunteer after-school activity program for middle school students. The most important recommendation was the continuation and expansion of the program. The need had become how to fund a coordinator of the program that could expand and sustain an ongoing volunteer activity program for young adolescents. To do this required cooperation of the various town boards. The intent of the cooperation was analogous to the diversity of volunteers who worked in concert for the after-school activity program.

At some point money is required to sustain any program. Funding makes any new or existing program political because the programs compete with other political players who control or have access to funds. Any new program either supports or is in conflict with individual and group values. Hence, the most complex yet essential recommendation is; the child advocate must understand the political environment to secure either funds or permission to carry out or sustain the after-school activity program or any new program. A framework is required so an analysis can be formulated to create an appropriate political intervention or political strategy. The writer strongly recommends an understanding of political systems analysis. Wirt and Kirst (1992) described Easton's heuristic scheme for political analysis called systems analysis. The benefit of this system for the creative child practitioner is the framework of political systems analysis which allows the practitioner to order information on hunches in a conceptual framework. For example, an input (need for after-school activities) from the environment generates a demand (support and/or funding) on the system. There is support from interest groups (businesses, schools, parents) that enter the political system (town boards of selectmen, finance, and education) where the demands are converted into allocated values and resources (decisions and actions) as an output (activity program) into the environment. The output is fed back as an input (expansion of the after-school activity program) in this cycle.

Sroufe (1995) contended the understanding of the politics of education can be enhanced by paying more attention to the values of key actors. Wirt and Kirst (1992) discussed the usefulness of knowing a few influential people can shape community outputs by controlling demands to the schools or town agencies. Sroufe discussed the importance of time frames and time pressures

within which various actors operate. Sroufe, in discussion of David Truman's interest group approach stated Truman coined the term 'access' as central to the analysis of interest groups. In Truman's analysis of interest group behavior the focus was on the number and the characteristics of points of access where the individual or group interest can be promoted.

Schattschneider in Sroufe (1993) viewed "the scope of the conflict" as the most important strategy of politics. Grodzins in Sroufe point was the American system of government has "multiple cracks" that could be used for policy influence. In Sroufe (1993 & 1995) Grodzins defines crack as (a) fissures, where there are opportunities for individuals and groups to make their views known and (b) wallop, where one takes a smack at government to make a difference in policy. The point was and will be, when a new child centered program is created, the practitioner must pay attention to the political environment focusing on (a) the individual values of key actors, (b) expansion of the scope of the conflict, and (c) multiple cracks and access in the political system.

The practitioner must be careful to reinforce or bring into alignment politicians values and attitudes, making sure the values do not act as blocks against the after-school activity program. An understanding of key variables in the authoritative allocation of values and resources is necessary, to know why and how groups and individuals use political power to satisfy their values. These include:

1. Quality - A substantial net improvement in the well-being of those affected by policy.

2. Efficiency - Takes two forms, economic (minimizing costs while maximizing gains) and accountability (oversight and control of the local exercise of power.

3. Equity - The use of political authority to redistribute critical resources required for the satisfaction of human needs.

4. Choice - The opportunity to make policy decisions or reject them (Wirt & Kirst, 1992, pp. 82-83).

To reiterate, whether one likes to or not, success in the creation and sustainment of any program for children requires an understanding of political process and political systems analysis. All of the creative concepts that were used in the pilot community-based volunteer after-school activity program for the middle school students would not mean much if the program could not be sustained. Many times educators, due to the very nature of their work with children coupled with the myth that educators and child advocates are non-political, fail to see and understand the political process and political micro-cultures that can make or break any beneficial program for children. Educators and child advocates must be effective lobbyists for their programs. Active lobbying for a new program for children requires an astute political analyst where there is constant re-evaluation of the political system adjusting for and anticipating the various outputs involved in the political conversion process.

The media is quite powerful. Knowing when to use or not use the media is quite important. There is the risk that material will not be presented correctly, or it may be taken out of context changing the true meaning or intent of programs. Developing a relationship with reporters is critical and involving the reporters with the program coordinator and children can have may beneficial effects including free press about the program. Developing a relationship with the local newspaper reporters was done in the after-school activity program and has led to easier recruitment of volunteers.

Finally do not get locked into a mold with a vision and framework. Any new program can create controversy. Understanding change and the process of change is essential. Senge's systems approach for organizational change, his discussion on system learning disabilities, and his laws of the fifth discipline help make understanding change and resistance to change clear (Senge, 1990). The understanding and utilization of some Senge's concepts would be helpful to the practitioner who creates relevant and meaningful programs for children. Understanding change and Senge's systems approach would enable the practitioner to be a creative problem solver. The concepts would equip the practitioner (a) to sustain any innovative program through the process of change, and (b) help the practitioner be aware of the resistance the system applies to change, due to the creation of any new program such as a community-based volunteer after-school activity program for middle school

Dissemination

The material presented to the reader in this practicum will be disseminated through many avenues over an extended period of time. The dissemination will be done through the writer's sphere of influence, in many cases on a one to one basis with other interested child care professionals and educators. Additionally dissemination will take place through conference presentations, journal articles, and workshops.

In the conference arena the goal is to present this material to state and eventually national conventions. During 1996 the focus will be to present to the New England League of Middle Schools Conference. When time permits the writer would like to submit an article to the Connecticut Education

Association Advisor, the National Education Association Today, Educational Leadership, National Association of Secondary Schools Principals Bulletin, and the Middle School Journal.

Workshops could be presented to local town recreation departments, human services, and schools for inservice. The dissemination could be presented through the political arena either at the local or state level. One of the most effective ways of disseminating information about the community-based after-school activity program will be through direct contact with people. Information would be shared with colleagues and friends from other towns, and by talking about the after-school program with the various people the writer comes in contact with informally.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE ACTIVITY OFFERINGS

SAMPLE ACTIVITY OFFERINGS

Archery (7-8)

Band

Chamber Chorus (6-8)

Computer Games (7-8)

Copper Punch (6)

Chorus (6-8)

Dance (7-8)

Dog Fanciers (6-8)

E-Team (6)

Ensembles

Games, Puzzles (6-8)

Grade 8 Spirit (8)

Indoor-Outdoor Sports (6) (7) (8)

Leisure Reading (6-8)

Magic Moments in Sports (6-8)

Math Games (6-8)

Newspaper (6-8)

Photo (6-8)

Spelling Team (7-8)

Sugar Eggs (6-8)

Art Display (6-8)

Card-Collecting (6-8)

Chess, Checkers (6-8)

Computer Golf Games (8)

Country Line Dancing (6-8)

Cross-Age Teaching (8)

Dance Decorations (7-8)

Drawing

Embroidery (6-8)

Furry Creations (6-7)

Girls' Sports (7-8)

Hackey Sack (7)

Jewelry-Making (6-8)

Macramé (6-8)

Maintenance (7-8)

Math Video (7-8)

Old Time Radio Drama (6-8)

Scrabble (6-8)

Stock Market (7-8)

APPENDIX B

AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITY VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM

AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITY VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM

Time (Please circle one) 2:30-4:00 4:00-5:30 Both times Either Time

Name of Activity_____

Name of person (people) offering the activity

_____

(Please designate by circling)

Parent Business High School Student Senior Citizen other

This activity is for (6th 7th 8th) graders. Circle all that apply

This activity is for (boys girls both).

Minimum number of students you need to offer the activity _____

Maximum number of students you will accept in the activity _____

Location, size of space, special needs, concerns, materials and equipment - please describe

_____

_____

_____

Please write a summary of your activity, specifying requirements, prerequisites, cost of supplies or materials for students, description, restrictions, etc. This summary will be read to students over the intercom.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS

Learning Computer Components 2:30-4:00 (6-8)

This activity will be a seminar on computer components which will include complete assembly of a computer. A discussion will be held on the function of each computer component. Precautions and safety guidelines in handling computer components will also be discussed. These sessions will be limited to assembly of computer central processing unit (excludes monitor, keyboard and other peripherals).

Stock Market Club 4:00-5:30 (7-8)

This activity will offer (a) an introduction to financial investing, (b) reasons and goals for investments, (c) learning how to read financial sheets, (d) learning about bank interest, and (e) hands on investment activities.

Counted Cross Stitch Embroidery 4:00-5:30 (6-8)

This activity will offer beginning instruction in counted cross stitch embroidery. The finished piece will be ready to hang or give as a gift. Cost for supplies will be about $2.00.

Study Group 2:30-4:00 (8)

This activity will be a study group where students can work on homework completion, test preparation and study skills.

Science Demonstrations and Projects 2:30-4:00 (6-8)

These activities will include student investigation and inquiry followed by demonstrations based on those inquiries. These sessions will be conducted by EHS chemistry students.

Spanish Club 2:30-4:00 (7-8)

Hola! Are you a 7th or 8th grade Spanish student and want to learn and speak Spanish better? Then the Spanish club is for you! Two 5-year Spanish students will be coming from the high school to help you and give you new ideas to learning Spanish in a fun and exciting way! So don't wait, there are only 15 openings, sign up today!

Fashion Plus 2:30-4:00 (6-8 girls)

Lights, camera, action! Hey girls have you ever wanted to look liké a model? Now is your chance. Starting on Wednesday January 4th at 2:30 three high school juniors will inform you on strategies of applying makeup, doing manicures, styling hair and other important topics dealing with health and beauty. We encourage all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade girls to join our fashion sessions. There are only 20 available spaces so be sure to sign up quickly!

Drama 2:30-4:00 (6-8)

This activity will expose students to drama in the form of introduction games, improvising, pantomime, relaxation techniques, monologues, and one-act plays. This activity will also introduce students to drama and theater arts at the high school level.

Workout Club- aerobics and stamina building 2:30-4:00 (6-8)

Workout club entails a fun time while getting into shape. Aerobics, toning, and other ways to maintain physical fitness will be exercised. All you need to bring is yourself and clothes suitable to work-out in (shorts, t-shirts). Sign-up promptly to ensure yourself a space. Hope to see you there. Thank-you!

The Good Old Games 4:00-5:30 (6-8)

Ever wonder what people did in the days before video games? Learn how to play and construct game boards to games played in ancient China and Colonial America.

Aerobics Class 4:00-5:30 (6-8)

This activity will be for any student who wants to improve their coordination skills, cardiovascular, dance, and rhythm. There will be exercising to popular music.

Computer Club 2:30-4:00 (6-7)

This would be an opportunity for students to play many different computer games. Some of the games include; Scrabble, Oregon Trail, and Carmen San Diego to name a few.

Chamber Chorus 2:30-4:00 (6-8)

Auditions will be held on Thursday December 15th and Monday December 19th from 2:30-3:30. Students must already be participants in either the 6th grade or the 7- 8th grade chorus. The group will sing music from the 18th to the 20th century. We will work on all aspects of proper choral singing. The chorus will continue past the 5 activity days and go to Tuesdays at the beginning of the second activity program which will start on March 14.

Victorian Jewelry Making 4:00-5:30 (6-8)

This activity will focus on making Victorian bead necklaces and bracelets that students could wear or give as presents. Magazine paper will be transformed into long beads, then these beads will be combined with craft and jewelry beads

to make the finished bracelets and necklaces. All material will be provided. The cost will be $3.00-$5.00.

Strip Quilting 4:00-5:30 (6-8)

This will be a beginning course where students will make a pillow or a lap quilt in the log cabin design.

Dance (Team) 2:30-4:00 (6-8 girls)

Students can learn how to dance or those who already know can just experience new choreography. There will be no cost(unless the girls vote to get outfits and perform). Flexible clothes should be worn- dance attire/shorts and T-shirts. If the activity turns into a performance dance team some type of costume will be required.

US Military History and Strategies 4:00-5:30 (6-8)

This activity will focus on a review/analysis of battle strategies in US history. A hands-on approach will be used in planning and utilizing military and war gaming activities for a clearer understanding of US military history and battle strategies.

"All about Money and Investments" 2:30-4:00 and/or 4:00-5:30 (6-8)

This activity will expose students to the various aspects of money and investments not normally taught in general education environments. The discussions will include defining various investment vehicles and how they interact with others. What is return, yield, interest, and capital gains? Simple money concepts like the "rule of 72," leverage, return of principle as opposed to return on principle. Also included will be a discussion of the tools and concepts

utilized by financial planners and investment advisors like Asset Allocation, Timing and Econometrics. The impact of taxes on investments and various tools and concepts used to minimize their impact of total return. The needs, desires suggestions, and interests of the participants will be met. Charts, diagrams and illustrations will be used in this activity.

Headlines and Deadlines 2:30-4:00 (6-8)

In this activity students will learn how the Courant is published. Topics to be covered include (a) how reporters find stories and write them, (b) what the editors do to help the reporters write better stories, (c) how the newspapers have changed over the years, and (d) what a newspaper will be like when you look for a job there. There will be some writing involved. This activity will be conducted by editors and reporters from the Courant.

APPENDIX D

VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTOR QUESTIONNAIRE

VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTOR QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Should the after school activity program continue? circle Yes No

Why?

a) If yes, how many days a week should the program be offered?

circle one 1 2 3 4 Everyday

Why?

b) How many weeks a school year should the program be offered?

The school year is 39 weeks including holiday weeks.

circle one 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 All Year

Other (put number)

Why?

c) How late should the program run?

circle one 4 p.m. 4:30 5 p.m. 5:30 6 p.m. 6:30

Other (put time)

Why?

2. Should classes be ----circle one 1 hour 1 1/2 hours 2 hours

Other (put length)

Why?

3. Should refreshments be offered? circle Yes No

a) If yes what kinds

4. Comments about your activity experience both positive and/or negative (time, number of meetings, students, topics, facilities, organization, etc.).

5. Would you be willing to offer an activity in the future or recommend this program to a friend or colleague? Yes No

Why?

6. Suggestions for program improvement or modification.

APPENDIX E

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Should the after school activity program continue? circle Yes No

Why?

a) If yes, how many days a week should the program be offered?

circle one 1 2 3 4 Everyday

Why?

b) How many weeks a school year should the program be offered?

The school year is 39 weeks including holiday weeks.

circle one 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 All Year

Other (put number)

Why?

c) How late should the program run?

circle one 4 p.m. 4:30 5 p.m. 5:30 6 p.m. 6:30

Other (put time)

Why?

2. Should classes be ----circle one 1 hour 1 1/2 hours 2 hours

Other (put length)

Why?

3. What activities or programs would you like to have offered?

Why?

4. What do you do after school from 3- 6 p.m.?

5. Should refreshments be offered? circle Yes No

a) If yes what kinds?

b) If yes how much would you be willing to pay per session for refreshments? circle one $0.00 $.50 $1.00 $1.50 $2.00 other (put amount)

Why?

6. Comments about your activity experience both positive and/or negative (time, number of meetings, students, topics, etc.)

7. Is it easier or harder or the same to get all of your homework done on activity days? circle one Same Easier Harder

Why?

8. Do you need to take a late bus to stay for activities? Yes No

Why?

9. Would you stay for a 4:00- 5:30 p.m. study or homework group? Yes No

Why?

10. Suggestions for improvement.

APPENDIX F

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Should the after school activity program continue? circle Yes No

Why?

a) If yes, how many days a week should the program be offered?

circle one 1 2 3 4 Everyday

Why?

b) How much would you be willing to pay for each day your child stays after school for activities? (circle one)

$0 $1 $2 $3 $4 $5 other (how much)

Why?

2. How many weeks a school year should the program be offered? The school year is 39 weeks including holiday weeks. (circle one)

5 10 15 20 25 30 35 All Year Other (put number)

Why?

3. How late should the program run? (circle one) 4 p.m. 4:30 5 p.m. 5:30 6 p.m. 6:30 Other (put time)

Why?

4. Should classes be (circle one) 1 hr. 1 1/2 hrs. 2 hrs. Other (put length)

Why?

5. What activities or programs would you like to have offered?

Why?

6. What do your children do after school from 3- 6 p.m.?

a) How long are the children home without adult supervision after school? (circle one- average) none 30 minutes 1 hour 1 1/2 hours 2 hours 2 1/2 hours 3 or more hours other (how much)

Why?

7. Should refreshments be offered? circle Yes No

a) If yes what kinds?

b) If yes how much would you be willing to pay per session for refreshments? circle one $0.00 $.50 $1.00 $1.50 $2.00 other (put amount)

Why?

8. Comments about your child's activity experience both positive and/or negative (time, number of meetings, students, topics, etc.)

9. Is it easier, harder or the same for your children to get all of their homework done on activity days? circle one Same Easier Harder

Why?

10. Should a late bus be provided for activities? Yes No

a) Times (circle one) 4 p.m. 5:30 p.m.

Why?

b) If you circled yes how much would you be willing to pay for each ride? (circle one) $0 $1 $2 $3 $4 other (how much)

Why?

11. Would you be willing to offer an activity? Yes No

Why?

If yes what type?

12. Should the students have access to the school library for studying and research after school with a teacher or librarian? Yes No

a) If yes how many days a week? (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5

b) If yes how late? (circle one) 3 p.m. 3:30 4 p.m. 4:30 5 p.m. 5:30 other (time)

Why?

13. Suggestions for program improvement